

Casualist Painting: Self-gratification in abstract painting

Creativity and creation have always been measured by the fidelity in which the academy standards are used and justified in relation to the proportions of the work in relation with the time it took to elaborate and the myths related to the medium and the supports. Following these and similar parameters are then given a series of values that are attached to the creator and his product. This has been challenged and jeopardized by many artists of all disciplines and throughout the history of art. Although it may seem unnecessary, redundant and a cliché, it is essential to mention the Fauvist, who experimented using a palette of color seemingly nonsensical to identify new appearances in the figurative pictorial representations of their moment. On the other hand we have to give fair space to Marcel Duchamp, the "ready-made" and his assemblies. With *Fountain (1917)* he questioned the perception of representational art and opened a window into the deep conceptual considerations, justifying the voice and concerns of the artist. Also we appoint Joseph Beuys and his extensive work that includes painting, drawing, sculpture, installation and performance and his contributions to art theory, formal education, and socio-political activities that presented the artist as being committed to the artistic process far beyond the act of producing. In his research and practices, part of what provokes and raises questions about what make a work of art, is that his work demands to be incisively analyzed and decoded. Based on the above we could continue listing artists that within their proposals raise or raised new ways to reach an end, sometimes fruitfully in other leaving only the attempt and drawing a part of the way for others to retake things where they left them.

In the eyes of history, painting over time has had good moments, not so good ones, bad moments and multiple metamorphoses. But analyzing this, who has suffered the ups and downs as metaphors for change, has been the one who uses paint for seeking, creating and maintaining relevant languages that transcend the voice of the each individual and their times.

The often victimized abstract painting has been theoretically killed and resurrected by critics, historians, artists, fans and fanatics, going through different representative and conceptual identities as architectural, geometry, emotional, empty, violent, decorative and folkloric states to name some.

Pepe Karmel, in his article, THE GOLDEN AGE OF ABSTRACTION: RIGHT, published in April 2013 by the magazine ArtNews states that for this generation this could be, the most important and glorious

time for abstraction. But considering moments like from 1912 till 1925 and from 1947 till 1970 as the greatest periods for abstraction we must understand that none has been more than the other. The abstraction seed, planted by of Malevich, Kandinsky and Mondrian were the foundation for Pollock and Rothko which in turn became the fruit, reaffirming and validating these non-figurative representations for grafts that would later end up forming a new imagery that collected everything before them and reconfigured it. *Karmel* classifies abstraction today in six groups; cosmological, landscape, anatomical, textiles, architectural and signs. These are self-explanatory with each of these classifications as representational seal.

Now it is important to clarify that these are ideas and / or generic concepts that may be too general. At the same time leaving behind the idea and value of the action and where it comes from. Not until recently has been spoken in Spanish about “pintura expandida” (expanded painting), defining or describing it as a two-dimensional space moving and breaking, frequently into three dimensions, for an experience where the viewer is more associated with the piece. Expanded painting contains random and few formal aspects that makes it seemingly ambiguous and diffuse. Being these its

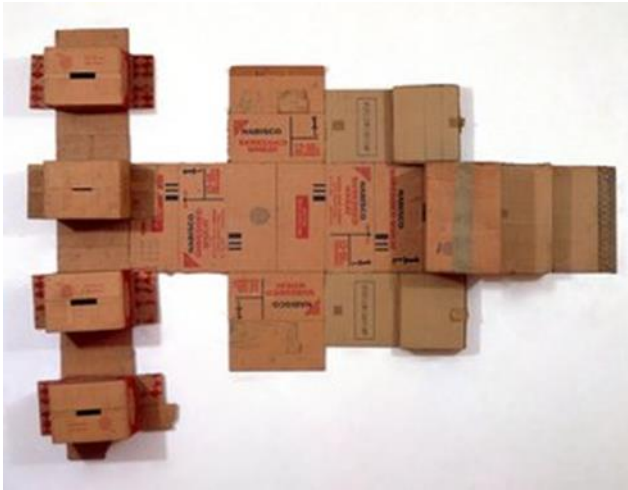


greatest attributes because they remove the fence that often borders art movements and art disciplines. Then, even more recently there has been some talking about the new casualists.

Lerma, José; Monument to a Light Spent, 2013 (Mylar and silicone, electric keyboard with speakers. 96 x 72 inches, Andrea Rosen Gallery)

Sharon Butler, in her article ABSTRACT PAINTING: The New Casualists, recently published in The Brooklyn Rail, talks about how artists that work with abstraction today have outgrown the teaching ways of thinking, working looser and more spontaneous processes. She does this by establishing a relationship with the essay written by *Raphael Rubinstein* in 2009, published in Art in America where he talks about a new abstraction to which it refers to as "provisional painting." *Rubinstein* points out Robert Rauschenberg with his cardboard boxes pieces, Noel Dolla with his inked handkerchiefs and

Richard Tuttle with his constant search of the humble beauty as the first signs in the genealogy of the provisional painters. In all three of them we can see traits of randomness, simplicity and could perceive also, attempts to improvisation. They, like many others use resources like found objects and create languages that are not intended for generic translations.



Rauschenberg, Robert; "Nabisco Shredded Wheat (Cardboard)" Robert Rauschenberg Foundation 1971 Credits

Casualist painting does not try, but it is ... It provides the receiver with phrases rather than complex sentences. In most cases, creating a series of lyrical codes that allow recreation and enjoyment is nothing but a replica of self-pleasure provoked by the artist. Many agree that the painting has to look casual, imperfect, unfinished, and pushed by impulses that cause auto cancellation and apparent inconsistencies that combined, extend the possibilities of the surface in relation with the artist and vice versa. These are completed, final works that often look incomplete. In an important comment that defines the casualist artist, *Mary Kudlak* explains that they do not necessarily suggest a new style and can be very similar to the Abstract Expressionists, and the countless Fluxus artist, although their intentions are different. The casualist intention is to make art, not to do art that is a reference to art. It is sincere and spontaneous without any agenda. In the casualist painting we can face the purest expressions of relationship between the surface, the artist and that moment of action. Here the artist uses the natural flow of ideas that arise, possibly the smallest spark and creates a chain reaction using layers of paint, textures, assemblies, and any number of combinations of the elements of art that keep work rooted frame with references where anything goes and at the same time respects the genealogical process of those who came before, as described by *Rubinstein* in his essay. In order to make it their own, casualist always uses their sense of musicality, their codes,

what they understand by poetic, by visual noise, their environment, and rethinking everything. In essence, these new ways of painting consist of all this. At the same time these ways are consequently a strong reiteration of the ideological and practical whim of the artist. That with the pretext of painting is self-gratifying to dive into a deep and dense process in which the climax always arrives in the less predictable moment.

Juan Alberto Negrón

27/09/2014